



STAFF REPORT
City of Dripping Springs
PO Box 384
511 Mercer Street
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Submitted By: Laura Mueller, City Attorney; Aaron Reed, Public Works Director

Council Meeting Date: February 15, 2022

Agenda Item Wording: **Public hearing and consideration of approval of an Ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2022 budget and for the reinstatement of the City of Dripping Springs Municipal Court and provision of the position of Part-Time Municipal Court Clerk and for amendments to the Parks budget related to Adult Softball. Sponsor: Mayor Foulds, Jr.**

Agenda Item Requestor: Michelle Fischer, City Administrator/Municipal Court Coordinator

Summary/Background: Over the past 4 years the City has taken a “voluntary compliance” stance on code enforcement. While this has been effective for the most part, there are always those violators who do not come into compliance. With the recent growth of development in the City, the amount of violations for signs, development, building permits, lighting, and wastewater pretreatment has seen a dramatic increase. While “voluntary compliance” is a great tool in educating the public about City ordinances that they may be unaware of, it is not always effective in achieving compliance. With the increase in cases, city staff recommends reinstating municipal court in order to bring continuous violators into compliance and to show those who do follow the rules that violators are taken to court. The City needs to bring back it’s municipal court to provide necessary tools to fairly enforce ordinances across the board.

The budget amendment is to fund the hiring of an experienced municipal court clerk who can help reinstate and run the Court. The City already has the positions of Municipal Court Judge and Municipal Prosecutor filled and budgeted for. If approved, this employee will immediately begin to reinstate the court, dates will be set for quarterly hearings, and continuous violators will receive citations to come to court. The funds will be taken from Litigation-Code Enforcement budget which was set to have cases go to District Court rather than Municipal Court.

Commission Recommendations: N/A

**Recommended
Council Actions:**

Approve job description and position of Municipal Court Clerk.

Attachments:

Budget Amendment; Staff Report. (Budget amendment also attached as separate item to move funds from consultants to payroll for position).

Next Steps/Schedule:

If approved, municipal court clerk will be hired. Then court should resume within 3 months on a quarterly basis.